

Mr. MacEachen (for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that the bill be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. MacEachen (for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

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● (1540)

STATUTE LAW (METRIC CONVERSION) AMENDMENT ACT, 1976

AMENDMENTS TO WHEAT BOARD ACT TO FACILITATE CONVERSION TO METRIC SYSTEM

The House resumed, from Thursday, June 9, consideration of the motion of Mr. Marchand (for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce) that Bill C-23, to facilitate conversion to the metric system of measurement, be read the third time and do pass; and the amendment thereto of Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain).

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, it really was not my intention to debate this very important bill, but since the government has not very much more legislation to bring in this afternoon I thought I would read a few documents into the record. Last Thursday, the Minister of State for Small Business (Mr. Marchand) said that we were not receiving any letters on metrication. However, we get quite a few letters from western Canada, as some hon. members opposite know. I have in my hand a letter addressed to the minister, which he has yet to answer. This letter is much the same as many other letters and it reads as follows:

Dear Sir:

Now that the metric conversion issue is once again in the forefront, and hopefully I will not be branded a "western redneck, or a crank", I would like to register my objections to the metric conversion in general, and as it affects western agriculture in particular.

I, as a lifetime farmer and rancher, find the conversion of acres to hectares, and miles to kilometers particularly objectionable. Anyone can readily see that it is absolutely impossible to rearrange and rebuild the surveyed road system which is tied directly to the "section of land" and vice versa. Even an "old farmer" like me could possibly accept, and in time understand a multiple of ten system in a very few areas, but to expect agriculture to pick up the tab, either directly or indirectly, for any of this conversion is just not right. Our input costs (due mainly to the manufactured products we need to run our farms as efficiently as possible) keep going up and up and we have no way to pass it on, but are controlled by world markets, unless these are manipulated via quotas, import or export restrictions and/or taxes, subsidies, etc. Over these we seem to have very little or no control. It is just not justice that we are expected (and quite often told) to get "more efficient", while the rest of the economy goes merrily along its way by simply adding any increased costs in input to the end product. However, I fail to see where "acres and miles" fit into this picture anywhere. There is not even any efficiency that can be involved here, but indeed the exact opposite.

From reading parts of *Hansard* on this matter I feel that most of the "feedback" the government side has obtained from western Canada has certainly been obtained from sources either non-agricultural or at least so far from the "grass roots" that the informants didn't know what grass is. We are sick and tired of just having things "crammed down our throats". In many, many cases it

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emerges in western Canada as sort of a "Big Daddy in Ottawa knows best" and that we are not capable to run our own affairs.

That was from Mr. William O. Bills, and it was addressed to the Minister of State for Small Business. It was written back on February 11, 1977, and as yet it has not been answered by the minister. I have in my hand a letter to an editor. This letter pretty well tells it all. It is unfortunate that the minister is not in the chamber. Perhaps the House leader did not tell him that the metrication bill was going to be discussed this afternoon. Perhaps he will come in a little later. The editor's note is as follows:

This letter, written by Bill Veitch, is in reply to an editorial which appeared in the *Western Producer* Feb. 3, 1977. He shares it with us.

The letter is from R.R. 1, Wainwright, Alberta, and it is dated February 16, 1977. It reads as follows:

Dear Mr. Editor:

Your editorial in Feb. 3rd issue in which you wholeheartedly endorse metric conversion of the grain industry you also state that most farmers in the west also support your view. Well, Mr. Editor, practically all the farmers I have talked to in the Wainwright Vermilion, Irma and Edgerton area, wholeheartedly disagree with you. Until now most of us felt metric conversion was already the law of the land, and only now, when we recently heard that metric Bill C-23 was before parliament for second reading and was meeting opposition from members of parliament Alvin Hamilton, Don Mazankowski and Cliff McIsaac, to name a few—

That hon. member is from the government side, but I can add the hon. member for Pembina (Mr. Elzinga), the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams), the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie), the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggan (Mr. Hnatyshyn), the hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Smith), the hon. member for Meadow Lake (Mr. Cadieu) and many others who have spoken on this bill, including the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers). The letter continues:

—did we realize there was still a chance to save us from this costly extravaganza.

Mr. Editor, I ask you, have you given any thought to the staggering sums of money metrication will cost the country, i.e., the retooling of factories, disruption to the building industry, and the obsolescence brought to the machine industry?

I would also point out to you that metrication will lend itself to many costly errors. You refer to \$3.00 per bushel of wheat being equal to \$77.81 per tonne, which I think should read \$110.23 per tonne.

To make your editorial agree more with your line of thinking you also oversimplify metrication by stating the change will do away with inches, feet, yards, rods, furlongs, chains and miles, replacing them all with the metre.

As a former football player, I disagree with Jake Gaudaur, the commissioner of football. It is going to be difficult because instead of having yards on the football fields we will have so many metres. The field is going to be wider and longer and it is going to cause havoc with our great national sport, football.

Mrs. Campagnolo: In English rugby they managed to convert.

Mr. Paproski: The letter continues:

If you are going to refer to all the imperial measures why not include the milli, centi, deci, deca, hecto, and kilometres as well as metre? You also state cups, pints, quarts, gallons, pecks and bushels will all be replaced by the litre. Why did you not tell us how to judge good seed oats in metrics? We now know that good